

USAirways' assets, which includes 86 jets and 14 gates at six East Coast airports.

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As part of the deal, American and United would join together to operate the highly lucrative shuttle routes between Washington, D.C., New York, and Boston, which are now operated by US Airways. In addition, American Airlines is willing to pay \$82 million for a 49 percent stake in DCAir, the airline created to allay antitrust concerns about the proposed United-US Airways merger. DCAir plans to take over most of US Airways' operation at Reagan Washington National Airport.

If approved, United Airlines and its arch rival, American Airlines, will control half of the U.S. air travel market. Delta Airlines, United and America's next biggest competitor, will be left behind with only 18 percent of the domestic U.S. market.

In response to this unprecedented consolidation of the airline industry, the CEO of the low-fare airline AirTran called the proposed merger one of the most brazen attempts by any two dominant businesses in any industry to simply accomplish together what they so vigorously resisted in recent years, the reregulation of the airline industry. However, instead of the Federal Government doling out routes and dividing up airport assets, it is the airlines themselves that are gobbling up their weaker rivals and carving up the Nation.

With new hubs in Charlotte, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia to complement the existing operation at Washington-Dulles, United will rule the eastern seaboard in a proposed merger era. American will dominate the Midwest with the addition of St. Louis to its hubs at Dallas-Fort Worth and Chicago O'Hare. American will also have a significant presence at Reagan Washington National and New York's Kennedy airports.

Faced with this tremendous market power possessed by a combined United-US Airways and a combined American-TWA-US Airways, the remaining network carriers, namely Delta Airlines, Northwest Airlines and Continental, will have to merge in some fashion to survive. This is the only way that they can acquire the size and scale necessary to compete in a rapidly consolidating industry. Therefore, in a postmerger era, it will not be two megacarriers dividing up half of the U.S. market, but, rather, three or four megacarriers controlling 80 percent of the U.S. market.

Low-fare carriers will have to compete vigorously for the remaining 20 percent. This is, of course, if the megacarriers allow them to survive. Even today, when competition supposedly is alive and well, major carriers use their power to frustrate new

entrant carriers and drive smaller competitors out of their established hubs.

The major carriers use everything in their power, including airplane capacity, airport assets, and frequent flier programs, to squash competition from low-fare, new entrant airlines. Yet, the major carriers do not vigorously compete with one another. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) found that major network airlines have raised fares the most in markets where they compete only with one another. When they are forced to compete against a low-fare carrier, prices have not risen nearly as much. In fact, according to the DOT, in a market lacking a discount competitor, 24.7 million passengers per day pay on average 41 percent more than their counterparts in a hub market with a low-fare competitor.

Three mega-carriers will have mega-market power and even more tools to drive out and keep out new competition. And, if six major carriers do not compete against each other today, why would three mega-carriers compete against each other in a post-merger tomorrow? Therefore, if the U.S. airline industry is allowed to consolidate, we will be left with essentially a re-regulated airline industry where the airlines call the shots and set the fares. With so few choices, airlines would have a captive consumer. Customer service would decline—if that is even possible given the level it is at today—and fares would increase. It's a lose-lose situation for customers. In that case, the federal government will have no choice but to step in and, in the public interest, assume its role as regulator. That's right. I firmly believe that if there are only three or four mega-carriers serving the U.S. market, the federal government will once again have to regulate the airline industry—overseeing fares, routes, and access to airports—in order to ensure a healthy state of competition.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8, DEATH TAX ELIMINATION ACT OF 2001

Mr. REYNOLDS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-39) on the resolution (H. Res. 111) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to phaseout the estate and gift taxes over a 10-year period, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

EQUAL PAY DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago I was here in jest and in honoring the Duke team. I want to speak on a very serious subject at this point in time.

It is just days after the end of Women's History Month and just weeks be-

fore millions of Americans will collectively honor their mothers on Mother's Day. Both events are borne out of the great respect and admiration we have for the women who have so strengthened our Nation, our society, and our families. Yet even today, Mr. Speaker, we must face up to this reality: American women earned only 72 cents for every dollar that men earned in 1999 for equal and comparable work, according to the latest report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a drop of 1 cent from 1998. Put another way, that 72-cent figure means that today, Tuesday, April 3, is the day on which women's wages catch up to men's wages from the previous week. It takes women 7 working days to earn what men earn in 5.

This gender wage gap exists even when men and women have the same occupation, race, and experience; are employed in the same industry, in the same region, and are working for firms of equal size. But here, Mr. Speaker, is what it means in real terms. Each week it means that women, on average, have \$28 less to spend on groceries, housing, child care, and other expenses for every \$100 of work they do. Each month it means that women, on average, work 1 week for free. And over the course of a lifetime, it means that the average 25-year-old woman will lose more than \$5 million due to the wage gap. Let me repeat that: During their working lives, women will, on average, lose \$5 million because of the unfair wage gap.

The wage gap is even larger for women of color. African American women are paid only 65 cents for every dollar earned by a man, and Hispanic women make only 52 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

Yes, our Nation has made great strides in gender equality. In 1979, for example, women earned only 63 cents for every dollar men earned. But the wage disparity that exists in our society continues, and it is simply unacceptable. It is wrong.

I speak not only as a legislator, but as the father of three daughters and the grandfather of two granddaughters. Bella Abzug, a leader in the fight for women's equality and a former Member of this House, once remarked, and I quote, "The test for whether or not you can hold a job should not be the arrangement of your chromosomes." We must apply that same test with equal vigor on the issue of fair pay. If you can do your job, there must be no question that you will receive fair pay for your labor.

This issue, after all, is not strictly a woman's issue. It is an issue that strikes at the heart of family finances and fairness. Unequal pay robs entire families of economic security. More women than ever are in the work force today, and their wages are essential in supporting their families. Sixty-four

percent of working women provide half or more of their family's income, according to a 1997 study by the AFL-CIO. And the wage gap costs the average American family approximately \$4,000 each year.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about giving their money back to them, the taxpayers. That is an appropriate subject for us to discuss. But it is also clear that paying equal wages to our women workers would be a better benefit for them. So despite the fact that equal pay has been the law since the passage of the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, we still have a long way to go.

That is why I have cosponsored, Mr. Speaker, and urge my colleagues to support, H.R. 781, the bipartisan Pay-check Fairness Act. This legislation would toughen the Equal Pay Act, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

ENVIRONMENTALISTS ARE HURTING POOR AND WORKING PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago it was announced that California utility rates were going up 50 percent on top of an earlier 10 percent increase. Is this a sign of things to come for the rest of the Nation? Already people all over the country have seen their utility bills go up significantly in recent months.

Also, a few days ago it was reported that OPEC has voted to cut oil production by a million barrels a day, and that our gas prices are going to greatly increase this summer. The Air Transport Association told me a few months ago that each 1 cent increase in jet fuel costs the aviation industry \$200 million. Thus, if oil goes up even just a little more, airline tickets will have to go up, forcing huge numbers more onto our highways, which are hundreds of times more dangerous than flying.

Who is responsible for all this? We can thank environmental extremists, who almost always seem to come from wealthy families, and who are not really hurt if prices go up on everything. In California they have protested and have kept any new power plants from being built for many years despite greatly increased demand produced by the Internet and population growth.

All over this country, though, we have groups of environmentalists protesting any time anyone wants to dig for any coal, drill for any oil, cut any trees, or produce any natural gas. This has driven up prices for everything and has destroyed jobs and has hurt the poor and those on fixed incomes the most. It has hurt truckers and farmers, and has driven many of our manufacturing jobs to other countries.

The current issue of Consumers' Research Magazine has an article entitled, "Why Natural Gas Problems Loom," by an editorial writer for USA Today. Listen to parts of this article. "The problem is that the same government pushing natural gas demand is also keeping vast stocks of it essentially bottled up underground through tight and sometimes absolute restrictions on what can be done on the land and sea above. Two hundred thirteen trillion cubic feet of natural gas are off limits to drillers, thanks to a vast web of regulations and moratoria on drilling. The reason for all this is simple," the article says. It says, "Environmentalists and preservationists have long pressured government to restrict or ban drillers. President Clinton, shortly before leaving office, took still more supplies away through his national monument declarations."

Some of these environmental groups, Sierra Club, Earth First, and others, have gone so far to the left that they make even Socialists look conservative. They are really hurting the working people by destroying so many good jobs and driving up prices at the same time. They tell former loggers and coal miners and others not to worry, that they can retrain them for jobs in the tourist industry; ecotourism. But who in his right mind wants to give up a \$15- or \$20-an-hour job for one paying barely above minimum wage, which is what most tourism jobs pay.

These radicals hurt most the very people they claim to help, and help most the big corporations they claim to be against. In the late 1970s, we had 157 small coal companies in east Tennessee. Now we have five. What happened? Well, we had an office of the Federal Government, OSM, open up in Knoxville. First, they drove all the small companies out, then the medium-sized companies were next. Federal rules, regulations, and red tape hurt small businesses and small farms the most. Big government really helps only extremely big business and the bureaucrats who work for the government.

Mr. Speaker, I chaired the Subcommittee on Aviation for 6 years. Environmental rules and regulations have caused runway and other airport projects to take sometimes 10 or even 20 years to complete, projects that could have been done in 2 or 3 years. This has caused the cost of air travel to be much higher than it would have been, and has caused many of the delayed flights we have today.

When I talk about the higher utility bills and all the lost jobs that environmental extremists have caused, nothing could potentially cause more harm to working people and lower-income families than the Kyoto agreement. There are not words adequate enough to thank President Bush for his cour-

age in stopping this economic disaster from hitting this Nation. Our economy started slowing dramatically last June, according to the Christian Science Monitor, a liberal newspaper. This was 7 months before President Bush took office. To enforce this Kyoto agreement at a time of economic slowdown would run the risk of putting us in near depression conditions.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, when people see their utility bills shoot up, when gas prices go higher, when homes and every other product made from trees cost twice what they should, they can thank the environmentalists.

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We have made great progress over the last 25 or 30 years with our air and water, but some of these groups do not want people to hear good things about the environment because their contributions would dry up.

The really sad thing, Mr. Speaker, is that this is all about big money. Poor and working people are being hurt so environmentalists can scare people and get more contributions. And companies which benefit if we import more oil, OPEC countries, shipping companies and others, contribute to these groups so we will have to import more products which are made from natural resources. It is really sad what environmentalists are doing to the poor and working people in this country.

A NEW DECLARATION OF ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, America needs a new declaration of economic independence: Freedom, justice, opportunity. These are the values that our parents, grandparents, and forebears lived and died for. These are the values that prompt young men and women to give themselves to military and public service. These are the values that reflect the highest ideals of our country and what America has historically offered to the world.

Thus, last week's debate on taxes, the first major economic debate of the 21st century and of the new Presidency, disappointed me greatly. The debate should have centered on what is the wisest economic course of action for the sustenance of our republic. But the debate basically boiled down to what every American can take for himself or herself. The President went around the country divisively and derisively saying, "It's not the government's money; it's your money." Except for one thing: We, the American people, are the government. His rhetoric appealed to the most selfish instincts imaginable; and his proposals are proving he is headed towards government of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich.